

## New Americans in the Ocean State

The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Rhode Island.

### ***Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Rhode Island's population and electorate.***

- **The foreign-born share** of Rhode Island's population rose from 9.5% in [1990](#) [1], to 11.4% in [2000](#) [1], to 12.2% in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Rhode Island was home to 128,453 immigrants in [2008](#) [2], which is more than the entire population of [Hartford, Connecticut](#) [3].
- **48.5% of immigrants (or 62,275 people) in Rhode Island were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#) [2]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **11.6% (or 62,232) of registered voters** in Rhode Island were “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2006 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#) [4].

### ***Nearly one-in-seven Rhode Islanders are Latino or Asian.***

- The **Latino share of Rhode Island's population** grew from 4.6% in [1990](#) [5], to 8.7% in [2000](#) [5], to 11.6% (or 121,891 people) in [2008](#) [2]. The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.8% in [1990](#) [6], to 2.3% in [2000](#) [6], to 2.9% (or 30,473 people) in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 3.9%** (or 20,000) **of Rhode Island voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.8%** (9,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) [7].
- In Rhode Island, **nearly nine-in-ten (or 89% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#) [8], according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

### ***Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Rhode Island's economy.***

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Rhode Island totaled \$2.2 billion**—an increase of 436.7% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$810.4 million**—an increase of 288.3% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) [9] at the University of Georgia.
- Rhode Island's 3,415 **Latino-owned** [10] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$213.7 million and employed 1,185 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available. The state's 1,529 **Asian-owned** [11] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$326.1 million and employed 2,618

people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

### ***Immigrants are essential to Rhode Island's economy as workers.***

- Immigrants comprised **14.2% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [2] (or 80,746 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

### ***Unauthorized immigrants are integral to Rhode Island's economy as workers and taxpayers.***

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.6% of the state's workforce** (or 20,000 workers) in [2008](#) [12], according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Rhode Island, **the state would lose \$698.0 million in economic activity, \$310.0 million in gross state product, and approximately 3,780 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#) [13].

### ***Immigrants are integral to Rhode Island's economy as students.***

- Rhode Island's 4,114 **foreign students contributed \$142.7 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) [14].

### ***Naturalized citizens excel educationally.***

- In **Rhode Island, 22.4% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#) [15] **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 16.5% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 33.1% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 43.5% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in Rhode Island with a college degree **increased by 37.4%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) [15] from the Migration Policy Institute.
- In Rhode Island, **78.8% of all children** between the ages of 5 and 17 in families that spoke a language other than English at home also spoke English "very well" as of [2008](#) [15].

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- [1] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-34.pdf#page=3>
- [2] [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-context=st&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_1YR\\_G00\\_S0501&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree\\_id=308&-redoLog=true&-\\_caller=geoselect&-geo\\_id=04000US44&-format=&-\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_S0501&-ds_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree_id=308&-redoLog=true&-_caller=geoselect&-geo_id=04000US44&-format=&-_lang=en)
- [3] <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/09/0937000.html>
- [4] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/../../default/files/docs/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf%2523page%3D24>
- [5] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-3.pdf#page=4>
- [6] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf#page=5>
- [7] [http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2008/Table\\_4b.xls](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2008/Table_4b.xls)
- [8] [http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF\\_immigrant\\_families\\_brief\\_rhode\\_island.pdf](http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF_immigrant_families_brief_rhode_island.pdf)
- [9] <http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/docs/GBEC0903q.pdf>
- [10] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200cshisp.pdf#page=28>
- [11] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200csasian.pdf#page=28>
- [12] <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf#page=40>
- [13] [http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Undocumented\\_Workforce.pdf#page=69](http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact_of_the_Undocumented_Workforce.pdf#page=69)
- [14] [http://www.nafsa.org/\\_/File/\\_eis09/rhode\\_island.pdf#page=2](http://www.nafsa.org/_/File/_eis09/rhode_island.pdf#page=2)
- [15] <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state2.cfm?ID=ri#5>
- [16] [http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New\\_Americans\\_in\\_the\\_Ocean\\_State\\_2010\\_0.pdf](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New_Americans_in_the_Ocean_State_2010_0.pdf)